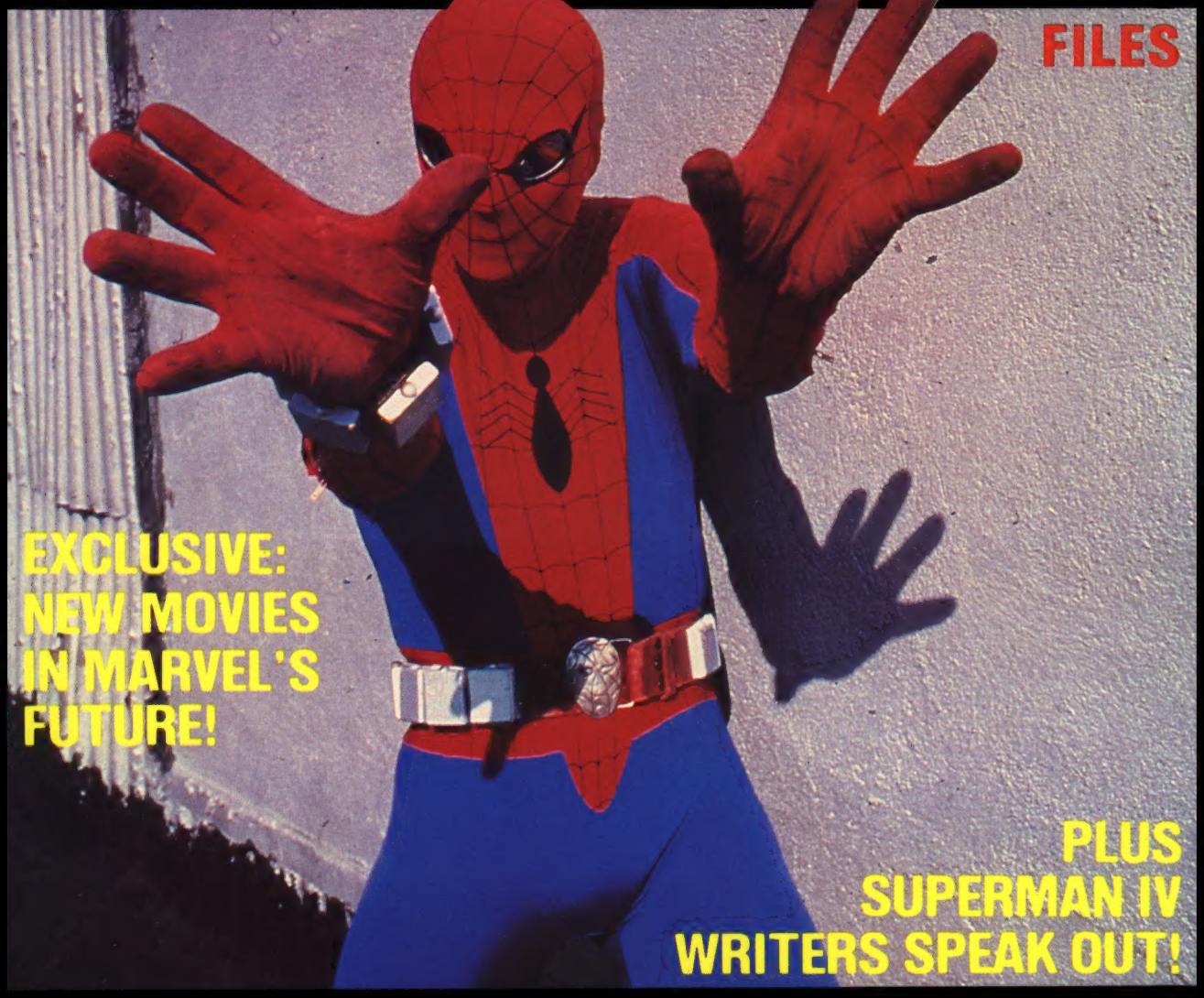
A FILES MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHT ON

THE SUPERHEROES FILES



EXCLUSIVE: NEW MOVIES IN MARVEL'S FUTURE!

PLUS SUPERMAN IV WRITERS SPEAK OUT!

SUPERMAN & SPIDER-MAN ON SCREEN

BY EDWARD GROSS

THE

SUPERHEROES ON SCREEN

FILES

FILES SERIES EDITED BY HAL SCHUSTER

THE

SUPERHEROES ON SCREEN

FILES

SUPERMAN AND SPIDER-MAN

BY EDWARD GROSS

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TO LISA

A HERO IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD

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What is a hero?

That question somehow manages to bring one back to childhood, and give the impression that you're reading the words off a blackboard. Go with the feeling for a moment.

You've returned to elementary school, adult trapped in a youngster's body, much as was the case with Kathleen Turner in **Peggy Sue Got Married**. Everything's just as you remember it.

To the left is the chubby kid who sneaks chocolate throughout the school day. To the front is the girl with the braces and ponytail, inevitably the class brain. On your right is the standard issue punching bag, the child that the entire class decides to use as their scapegoat on a regular basis. Have to read an extra chapter tonight? Two whomps for the scapegoat.

In the back, naturally, is the class clown, the kid who's got a smart ass response to everything the teaches says, and the one, you just know, is going to spend at least another year in the same grade.

Then there's the teacher, that underrated individual who has taken the often thankless job of educating young minds. He or she is the one who gets the mumbles and grumbles, stares of anger and cries of frustration every time something new is assigned. Yet many years later, those students who took such "abuse" are given cause to reflect, and express a kind of internal gratitude for what has been taught. Bearing this in mind, perhaps the teacher falls into the category of hero.

Which brings us back to the topic at hand: what is a hero?

The teacher sits on the corner of his desk, scanning the room patiently, hoping that someone will attempt an answer.

Finally a hand goes up, and a student tentatively replies, "Superman."

Some chuckles fill the room, but other children pick up on that response and add "Batman," "Spider-Man," "Wonder Woman," and so on. The teacher smiles, being sure not to discourage this feedback, and says, "All of your answers are correct, but those are characters of fiction. Let's take a look at the world we live in. Who would you consider heroes?"

A moment of silence before the answers begin, at first softly. "Policeman," one calls out. "Fireman," follows another. Then there's doctors, nurses, baseball players and fathers, who (stereotypes notwithstanding and with all due respect to working mothers) put food on the table.

You listen to these answers, aware that there is even more to a hero and that they can be found virtually everywhere.

Thoughts of the military and enlisted personnel come to mind, and one pauses for a moment. Maybe you were against the Vietnam War, or any number of military skirmishes around the world, but there were individuals who quite literally put their lives on the line for this country, and often times sacrificed them as well.

Turn your attention to the daily newspaper. Every day within the continuing reports of madness which grips the world, there's at least one story detailing how a human being has done something to enhance the life of another. Maybe somebody stopped a purse snatcher in action, saved a child from drowning or gave money to help a person in desperate need. Remember Bob Geldof and the historical "Live Aid" concert which took place in both the United States and London, raising many millions of dollars for relief in Ethiopia? The vision of one man, and the support of countless others, resulted in an effort which touched the world and will, hopefully, bring some form of security to that starving nation.

Wouldn't Geldof be considered something of a hero?

Let's move to a spiritual level, so to speak. Hasn't there been a time when you were so consumed with a personal dilemma that you haven't known where to turn? Perhaps you've ultimately gone to a spiritual spokesperson in your community. If you've received an answer in some form or another, and, as a result, found peace of mind, wouldn't that person fit into the category as well?

Take a look at the human spirit itself, perhaps the greatest example of a hero that there is. Man as a species has the uncanny ability to rise to the occasion; to take whatever cards fate has dealt him, and somehow manage to beat the hand. We've made it through world wars, the consistent threat of nuclear destruction and a variety of other ills, because man is, essentially, a survivor, unwilling to just lay down and die.

Even when disease strickens the body, the victim can either be consumed by it, or find the strength from within to tackle it head-on, living life to the fullest and grasping each day as it comes. In this case, even if they lose, they win.

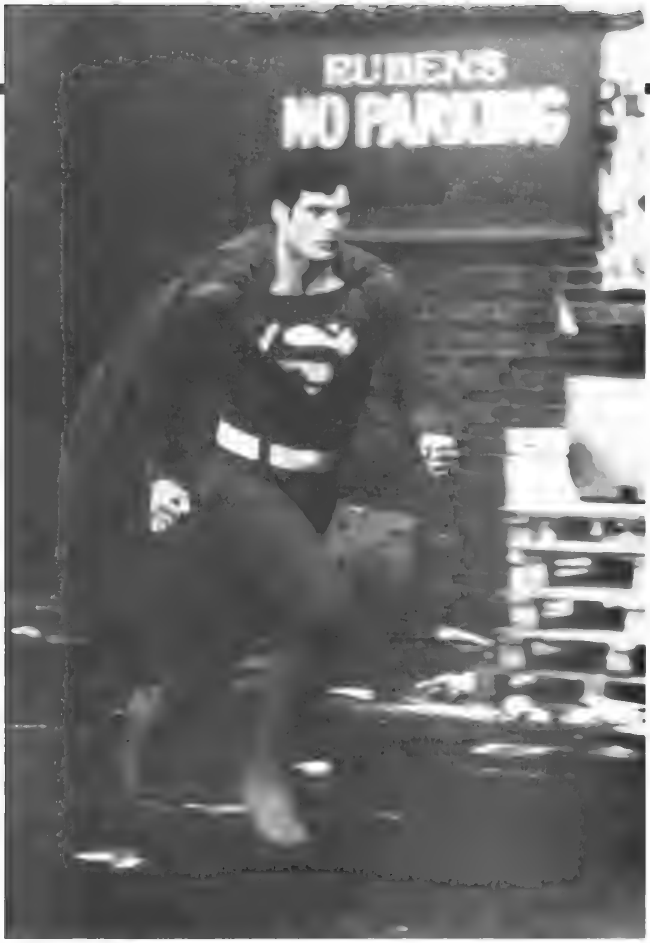
The school day comes to an end, and you find yourself back in your normal body. The classroom begins to fade from memory once again, yet the day's lesson remains vividly clear.

INTRODUCTION

What is a hero?

Take a look in the mirror and at the person standing next to you. You've just answered the question.

SUPERMAN


RUDENS
NO PARDONS

SUPERMAN IV A PREVIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH LAWRENCE KONNER AND MARK ROSENTHAL

SCREENWRITERS OF "SUPERMAN IV"

Last issue we provided an indepth interview with David and Leslie Newman, the husband and wife screenwriting team behind the first three **Superman** films.

Bearing this in mind, it only seems appropriate that we go behind the scenes of **Superman IV** with Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal, the writing partnership that has mapped out the Man of Steel's latest cinematic adventure.

Despite unpleasant creative experiences on **The Legend of Billy Jean** and **Jewel of the Nile**, Konner and Rosenthal are unable to shield the enthusiasm they feel for their latest collaborative effort. Like the Newmans, they feel a certain sense of responsibility in chronicling the adventures of what has become one of the greatest American myths of our time.

Working with star Christopher Reeve, they have produced what may very well be the most significant and timely Superman adventure ever, combining all we've come to expect from the character with today's greatest threat against mankind.

INTERVIEW

Lawrence Konner

Q: I guess the place to begin is how the two of you landed up as collaborators.
MR: On Superman?
Q: In general.
MR: We have actually known each other for quite a long time. We actually met at the University of Vermont about fifteen years ago. Although we've been friends since then, we only started writing together about three years ago.
Q: What was the first thing the two of you wrote?
MR: At the time it was called **Legend**, but it came out as **The Legend of Billy Jean**, a little transmogrified.
Q: Were you satisfied with the final results?
MR: No, we hated it and considered taking our names off of it.
Q: You also did **Real Genius**, correct?
LK: We did an uncredited rewrite on that.
Q: But how does it feel doing a rewrite on something, and not getting any credit for it?
MR: It doesn't bother us. Usually a picture starts out as one person's vision, and as long as it stays that vision it's the way the credit should be. Whereas **Legend of Billy Jean**, which started out in our script as our vision, was rewritten by the director who turned it into his vision, and we think it's one of the worst movies ever made.
Q: I wouldn't call it the worst movie ever made.
LK: We would (all laugh).
Q: So how did you elevate into **Jewel of the Nile** from something like **Legend of Billy Jean?**
LK: The script for **Legend** was really quite wonderful, regardless of how the movie turned out. Michael Douglas read that, and asked us to come in. At the time they were interviewing lots of writers to see what they would do with the sequel. We told him our ideas, and he liked those. So we were hired.
Q: Were you satisfied with the results of that one?
MR: No, we're also unpleased with what the director did.
LK: My analysis would be that the first film, **Romancing the Stone**, did $75 million at the box office, and virtually no teenagers went to see it. That's a remarkable achievement. The people who made the movie, primarily the studio and the director, made the decision that what they ought to do this time, since they've already got the adults, was to get the kids. So they filled it with unending explosions and chase sequences...that whole finale which went on and on, and was loud and huge and didn't mean anything. They took out alot of the romance and charm that was in both the first one and our script.
Q: So the script was pretty different than what landed up on the screen?
MR: Different in tone. We wrote something in a reality based romantic comedy vein...
LK: The size of the action was much smaller.
MR: And the director truly thinks only in terms of explosions going on.
LK: I think he was a little bit insecure with the people part of

it, the comedy and the romance. He felt more comfortable with triggering explosive charges. That's what he did, and that's what you saw. It was some sort of an attempt to get the kids this time.

MR: He sort of made it a goofy big effects movie, where we both thought it should be more true to the first one and our script.

Q: So the adventure was more low key in your script?

LK: That's exactly the way we felt. In a sense I think the second one, to some extent, didn't have the charm, delight and surprise of the first one, and it didn't compare, in terms of action and adventure, to the Indiana Jones films.

MR: And our script very much echoed the tone of the first one.

LK: The film was directed with a heavy hand. But it's not writer's decisions.

Q: So I guess we won't be seeing your name on a third one?

LK: No. But this is not just our specific problem with these couple of directors and couple of movies. This is the status quo of the writer in Hollywood.

Q: I would imagine the situation would be a very frustrating one.

LK: Very much so. We're hoping to find the right one, to direct and just to get control. Our position is that we don't think everything we write is perfect or brilliant, but we're here to discuss and change if necessary. We would just like for us, and for the writers as a class, to have a little more weight given to their opinion, instead of being treated as hired help.

Q: Is directing something the two of you want to move to?

MR: We're both trying to do that right now. It seems to me that you've got to do it or not. Do it, or don't complain.

Q: Superman IV. How did you get involved with it.

MR: Actually, we had been approached earlier and were not inclined to do it until we heard that Christopher Reeve would.

LK: For a while, Chris wasn't going to do it and they were talking about recasting. As long as they were saying that, we were saying that we weren't interested for several reasons. One, we think he's the perfect Superman. Two, because it seemed to us that the studio wasn't making the kind of committment to make a great movie if they weren't willing to step up and to pay his price and give him what he wanted.

Q: Was the problem money?

LK: No. Everybody agrees that the three Superman's get progressively worse. One was a great movie, two was okay and three was terrible. It was Chris' feeling, as well as ours, that it wasn't worth doing if Four was going to be more like Three than One. I don't think his hold out was about money at all. I think it was making sure that everyone involved was interested in making a great movie and not just another sequel.

MR: We looked at all three movies in one day, and you can very quickly see that the first one is one of the great

American movies. The other two, the third one quite especially, is terrible. I think Chris wanted to make sure in the budget and the studio committment that Warner Brothers and Cannon were going to make that committment. When he got convinced, we got convinced.

Q: What can you tell me about the story?

MR: There are certain things we can tell you, and certain things we can't. I will talk **theoretically**. We all felt, again, that the second one, a little bit, but the third one mostly, was a cynical movie in which the focus fell away from Superman. We felt that Superman is very interesting not just for the obvious story and plot reasons, but for who he is and why... If you look at every culture since the beginning of time, you'll find that every one has some kind of super hero in its mythology. He, as he fits in what America is and why we are what we are, is what we wanted to deal with on an epic scale. The fourth one will have the same epic size that the first one did, and that's something Chris, who's involved with the story, feels strongly about and we, as writers, feel strongly about. It should deal with big issues in a way that movies are transferred into mythology, and that's how we're approaching it. Let's see....

LK: Did we mention "epic" (all laugh)?

MR: I'd say, specifically, that **Superman IV** will see the return of Gene Hackman as Lex Luthor.

Q: That's great, but why bring back an old villain? As writers, why are you doing this, rather than bringing in a new one?

MR: I think if you look in the comic books, which we both did, that no one captures the true adversarial depth that Lex does. Whenever Lex was in a magazine, those issues were the biggest sellers. Those were the special ones. And I think Gene's performance is special too. He can make it humorous without being silly.

LK: I also think that both Lex and Gene have the size to give Superman a strong adversary, and what I think happened in number three is that you landed up with Robert Vaughn playing a kind of villain out of James Bond.... a kind of silly, evil mastermind you didn't quite believe was a real serious problem for Superman. And Lex brings with him some kind of resonance that he can really beat him.

MR: The first one had the advantage, and necessity, of restating the essential story for everyone. We figure that something fun in the elaboration, which is what the sequel does, is seeing how Superman continues. We really haven't seen that continuation with Lex. The second one sort of threw him away very quickly, and he became quite secondary. We think that it would be fun to have Gene back and investigate that, because the relationship between the two characters in the original stories is just wonderful. Again, we think having Gene back in that role will give it the proper scale and scope. These are more than just silly James Bond or adventure rip-offs. I think Superman holds a different kind of place in our mythology than even Indiana Jones and those kind of people do. They're much more life sized and less eternal.

Q: An article in **The New York Post** also mentioned disarmament.

MR: I would say that the story does deal with the question: Can Superman become involved in human destiny? What's great about Superman, as well as all the other equivalent myths through history, is the question of why the God doesn't step in and make everything right. That's always been one of the real core fascinations with that character. We will investigate that in this movie.

LK: The question, simply put, is why doesn't Superman just destroy all the missiles?

Q: But is it going to be the kind of thing where Superman finally says, "I should do this, but I can't. Man has to learn on his own?"

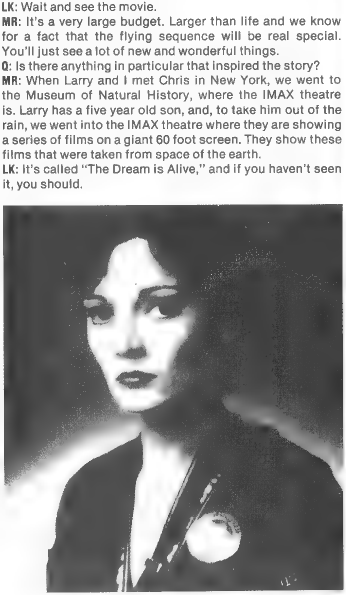
LK: Wait and see the movie.

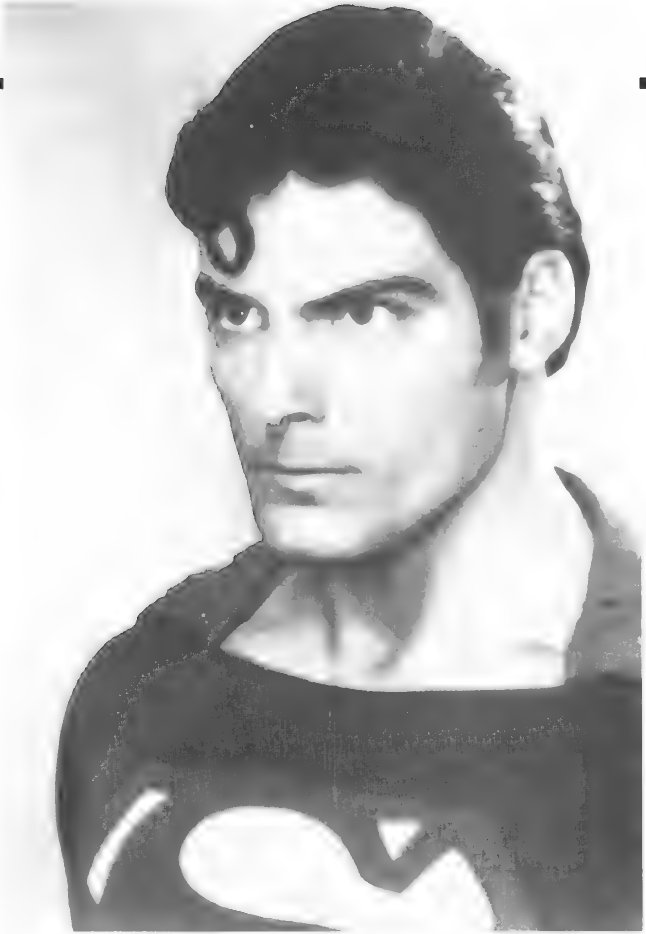
MR: It's a very large budget. Larger than life and we know for a fact that the flying sequence will be real special. You'll just see a lot of new and wonderful things.

Q: Is there anything in particular that inspired the story?

MR: When Larry and I met Chris in New York, we went to the Museum of Natural History, where the IMAX theatre is. Larry has a five year old son, and, to take him out of the rain, we went into the IMAX theatre where they are showing a series of films on a giant 60 foot screen. They show these films that were taken from space of the earth.

LK: It's called "The Dream is Alive," and if you haven't seen it, you should.





MR: It's proof that reality is more fantastic than science fiction. It's that moving.

LK: If you've looked at the space program for twenty years, you haven't seen it until you've seen these films.

MR: It's very moving. Larry, Chris and I were cynically wondering how great it could be. We sat down there, with a Warner Brother executive as well, and there is footage of earth in daylight that you can actually see, for instance, not only the exact outline of the boot of Italy, but you can also pick out the town from a great distance.

LK: Walter Cronkite is narrating.

MR: That same week the lead essay in **The New Yorker** just happened to be about a writer who happened to wander into the IMAX the same exact way, and he wrote about how you're brought to tears with the sense of seeing the entire planet as your home as opposed to the way we're brought up with this kind of nationalism. You begin to see the earth as this small, vulnerable but tender place that you live in, with no boundaries. You just see the planet. We felt that we wanted to investigate the orphan who has come to his new home aspect of the Superman mythology, and to endow certain humanistic concepts that a tradition of science fiction movies have. In **The Day the Earth Stood Still**, the visitor helps us understand who we are and how we should live. I think that's sort of the feeling we want to get in this movie.

Q: That's a pretty good way of telling me something without telling me something (laughs).

MR: Isn't it.

Q: My feeling is that **Superman III** was filled with problems....

MR: We thought it was horrible. It was a very cynical move to throw Richard Pryor a lot of money and throw away the budget of the movie. Everything was done very cheaply.

LK: **Superman III** was made for about half the price of the first one, and part of that went to Richard Pryor. The idea of opening a Superman movie, before the credits, with Richard Pryor in an unemployment line, lets you know you're in trouble. Where's Supes?

Q: Are you apprehensive at all about tackling something like Superman; having to compete with what's come before?

LK: I feel a sense of responsibility to something which has been with us for fifty years, and you want to make sure that I'm not the guy who put Richard Pryor and Robert Vaughn in and screwed it up.

MR: Something else that's interesting is that Chris, no matter what, understands that character. You could say to him, "Would Superman do this? Or Clark Kent?" His answers always seem right, in terms of tone, in terms

of nuance, gesture or humor in a scene. He can say, "No, Superman wouldn't do it that way. He'd do it this way." And he's almost always right.

Q: I think that's like Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates, or Sean Connery as James Bond.

LK: That's it, exactly.

Q: Were you both Superman fans?

LK: What's interesting is that I was a fan when I was a teenager and not since, and one of the things that we've learned from the DC people is that they're doing a different Superman. Part of the "New Superman" is clearing away the kind of underbrush irrelevancies that have come into the Superman myth which I never knew about because I stopped reading it twenty years ago. Apparently whenever they've needed him to do something, they've taken short cuts and did a back story to cover it. It turns out that he had super hypnotism for a while. They've done new back stories....

LK: And new survivors from Krypton. Now they're going back to what, oddly, we always thought had been there.

LK: They're telling us that the new Superman is clean and fresh, but he's exactly the guy we remember. By the way, do you know this little oddity: in the comics he didn't originally fly. He leaped, and then, apparently, the Max Fleischer animated cartoons had him flying and that's when the comics changed.

Q: Is this Superman as powerful as the previous films?

MR: I would say it's going to be closer to **Superman** one. We're going to try and keep it pretty straight and direct.

Q: Is there any difficulty with DC concerning the new Superman?

MR: No, they've been fine.

Q: Is it difficult at all to have an actor billed as "co-creator" of the story?

MR: No, Chris' involvement has only been helpful.

Q: If this is a success, could you see yourselves writing another one?

LK: Probably not, because we kind of like to do different things. Just as an aside, we were very excited when this opportunity came along. You just don't get that many opportunities in life to plug into things that are mythic. This is the real thing.

Q: Is there a trap in writing so many sequels?

MR: We already have several other projects set up which aren't sequels.

LK: We're hoping that, in a sense, this is not seen as a sequel. It will be a great movie with this guy named Superman, who we all know and love, and we'll find out what he's up to now.

The Cast & Their Role

PREVIEW OF SUPERMAN IV

CHRISTOPHER REEVE returns for the fourth time in the dual role of Clark Kent and Superman. Throughout the proceedings of **Superman IV**, Reeve as Clark goes through his typical nerdy motions, making the reporter the lovable putz we've come to expect. His Superman role, on the other hand, presents something fresh and innovative.

In **Superman — The Movie**, Reeve successfully conveyed the "newborn" aspect of the character, introducing him to the world and making initial contact with those who would quickly become his closest on-screen friends. Within the confines of **Superman II**, the character really comes to life in the romance between Superman and Lois Lane (Margot Kidder). This wasn't just for kids anymore!

Superman III, only a moderately successful effort, touched upon the Jekyll/Hyde nature of Clark and Superman. Unfortunately not enough was done in the film, which, to a large degree, was a disappointment — although Reeve was fine.

Now, in **Superman IV**, we're given a new angle on the man of Steel. For the first time he expresses that he no longer considers himself a visiter to this planet, and that earth is now his home as well. As such, he feels that its his duty to do what he can to preserve life on a worldwide scale, and announces that he is going to destroy all nuclear missiles. He had lost his homeworld (Krypton), and he refuses to allow the same thing to happen on earth.

This is an interesting addition to the character's make-up, and goes contrary to Jor-El's proclamation that "it is forbidden for you to interfere with human history," as stated in the original film. This also explores the long pondered question: why doesn't this "god who walks among men" make this planet a safe haven?

One can expect Christopher Reeve to add as much to his portrayal of Superman, as the script gives to the character.

GENE HACKMAN makes his third foray into the role of Lex Luthor, "the greatest criminal mind of our time," and he's just as dangerous as ever.

As an actor, Hackman has been able to take the character of Luthor, and walk the fine line between camp and drama. He's darkly humorous on the one hand, and deadly serious for the next, easily convincing audiences that he is fully capable of destroying Superman.

In the original film, his outrageous plan called for California to be nuked, and the value of his own worthless property to become priceless. In the sequel, he sided with the three Phantom Zone criminals in an attempt to defeat the Man of Steel, set them up in a position of power and himself as emperor of Australia.

Naturally Superman defeated him, placing Lex behind bars and filling him with an obsession to destroy his enemy. In **Superman IV**, he gets the chance.

Through a unique regenerating process, he creates a threat which just may have the power to carry out his plan. Not to worry, by the way, because Luthor also has another wild scheme up his sleeve. In the midst of worldwide disarmament, who do you suppose decides to auction off nuclear weapons to the highest bidder? Who else but Lex baby.

MARIEL HEMINGWAY stars in **Superman IV** as Lacy, daughter of a publishing magnate who has just bought the Daily Planet. Lacey, who's given the task of overseeing the transition in editorial point of view, develops a "thing" for Clark Kent, and does her utmost to get close to him. There's some semblance of competition between her and Lois, with the latter believing that Lacey is all wrong for Clark. Lacey eventually begins to re-examine her life as society's child, and comes to grips with the fact that there's more to living than money and life in the fast lane.

JON CRYER, who co-starred with Molly Ringwald in **Pretty in Pink**, joins the Superman family for the first time as Lenny Luthor, Lex's nephew. Essentially a juvenile delinquent/aspiring punk rocker, Lenny helps his uncle escape from a Florida prison, and bumbles his way through the rest of the film. In actuality, he is an alternate version of Otis, giving one a reason to ask: why does a criminal genius continue to surround himself with stupid people? Maybe it's an effort to make himself feel even more superior.

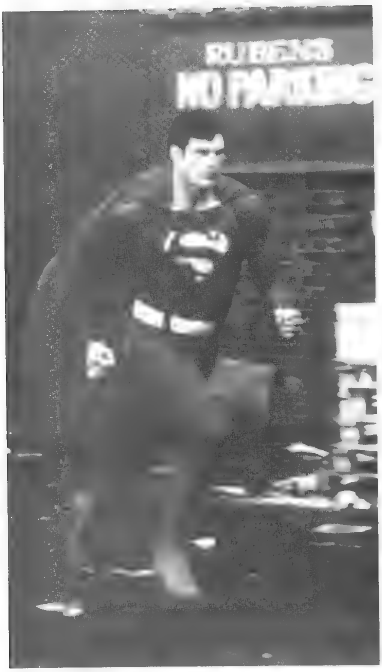
Returning to the saga in their familiar roles are MARGOT KIDDER as Lois Lane, MARC MCCLURE as Jimmy Olsen and JACKIE COOPER as Perry White.

Directing is Sidney J. Furie, whose previous credits include **Lady Sings the Blues**, **The Entity** and most recently, **Iron Eagle**.

Next issue, as casting continues, we'll continue our look at the other actors and their roles.

SUPERMAN II

The Cast



THE CAST

Lex Luthor	GENE HACKMAN
Superman/Clark Kent	CHRISTOPHER REEVE
Otis	NED BEATTY
Perry White	JACKIE COOPER
Ursa	SARAH DOUGLAS
Lois Lane	MARGOT KIDDER
Non	JACK O'HALLORAN
Eve Teschmacher	VALERIE PERRINE
Lara	SUSANNAH YORK
Sheriff	CLIFTON JAMES
The President	E.G. MARSHALL
Jimmy Olsen	MARC McCLURE
General Zod	TERENCE STAMP

AND IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Lueeen	LEUEEN WILLOUGHBY
Alice	ROBIN PAPPAS
Spokesman	ROGER KEMP
Terrorists	ROGER BRIERLEY
	ANTHONY MILNER
	RICHARD GRIFFITHS
Nun	MELISSA WILTSIE
Gendarme	ALAIN DEHAY
C.R.S. Man	MARC BOYLE
Cab Driver	ALAN STUART
Controllers	JOHN RATZENBERGER
	SHANE RIMMER
Nate	JOHN MORTON
Boris	JIM DOWDELL
Prison Warden	ANGUS McINNES
Bell Boy	ANTONY SHER
Mother	ELVA MAY HOOVER
Jason	HADLEY KAY
Father	TODD WOODCROFT
Krypton Elder	JOHN HOLLIS
Fisherman	GORDON ROLLINGS
Deputy	PETER WHITMAN
J.J.	BILL BAILEY
Boog	DINNY POWELL

Man at Bar.....HAL GALILI
Willie.....MARCUS D'AMICO
Dino.....JACKIE COOPER
Reporter.....RICHARD PARMENTIER
General.....DON FELLOWS
President's Aide.....MICHAEL J. SHANNON
Presidential Imposter.....TONY SIBBALD
Diner Owner.....TOMMY DUGGAN
Waitress.....PAMELA MANDELL
Rocky.....PEPPER MARTIN
Newsvendor.....EUGENE LIPINSKI
Kids.....CLEON SPENCER
.....CARL PARRIS

THE CREDITS

Executive Producer.....ILYA SALKIND
Produced by.....PIERRE SPENGLES
Directed by.....RICHARD LESTER
Screenplay by.....MARIO PUZO
.....DAVID NEWMAN
.....LESLIE NEMAN
Story by.....MARIO PUZO
Creative Consultant.....TOM MANKIEWICZ
Superman Created by.....JERRY SIEGEL
.....JOE SHUSTER
Music Composed and Conducted by.....KEN THORNE
From Original Material Composed by.....JOHN WILLIAMS
Photographed by.....GEOFFREY UNSWORTH B.S.C.
Director of Photography.....BOB PAYNTER
Director of Miniature Photography.....PAUL WILSON
Production Designed by.....JOHN BARRY
.....PETER MURTON
Film Editor.....JOHN VICTOR-SMITH
Director of Special Effects.....COLIN CHILVERS
Supervisor of Optical and Visual Effects. ROY FIELD B.S.C.
Additional Flying Sequences and
Director of Miniature Effects.....DEREK MEDDINGS
Special Effects Director—Flying Unit....ZORAN PERISIC
Director of Photography — Flying Unit.....DENYS COOP
Production Executives.....GEOFFREY HELMAN
.....ROBERT SIMMONDS
2nd Unit Directors.....DAVID TOMBLIN
.....ROBERT LYNN
Casting.....LYNN STALMASTER
Assistant Director.....DUSTY SYMONDS
Costumes Designed by.....YVONNE BLAKE
.....SUSAN YELLAND
Production Accountant.....DOUGLAS NOAKES
Financial Consultant.....FRANZ AFMAN
Production Supervisor (Niagara).....CECIL FORD
(Paris.....TIM HAMPTON
Executive Assistant to the Producers...MARIA MONREAL
Production Manager.....VINCENT WINTER
Supervising Art Director.....MAURICE FOWLER
Art Directors.....CHARLES BISHOP
.....TERRY ACKLAND-SNOW
.....NORMAN REYNOLDS
.....ERNEST ARCHER
Dubbing Editor.....DON SHARPE
Sound Mixer.....ROY CHARMAN
Camera Operators.....FREDDY COOPER
.....DAVID GARFATH
.....JOHN HARRIS
.....JOHN MORGAN
.....GINGER GEMMELL
.....CHICK WATERSON
.....PETER Mac DONALD
English Casting.....DEBBIE McWILLIAMS
Unit Manager.....ALLAN JAMES
Assistant Directors.....GARETH TANDY
.....CHRIS NEWMAN
.....TERRY MADDEN
.....ROY BUTTON
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.....RAOUL GIRARD
Continuity.....PAMELA DAVIS
.....DORIS MARTIN
.....ELAINE SCHREYECK
Assistant Continuity.....KATYA KOLPAKTCHY
Focus.....STEPHEN CLAYDON
.....JEFF PAYNTER
.....JONATHAN TAYLOR
.....DAVID WYNN-JONES
.....JOHN CAMPBELL
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Secretary to the Producer.....TRUDY BALEN

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.....PETER HOWITT
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Astronautical Consultant.....HARRY LANGE
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Optical and Special Effects Editor.....PETER WATSON
Dubbing Editors.....MIKE HOPKINS
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.....BOBBIE JOHNSON
Accounts Secretary.....BETTY WILLIAMS
Wardrobe Supervisor.....BETTY ADAMSON
Makeup.....STUART FREEBORN
Hairdressers.....BOBBIE SMITH
.....PAT McDERMOTT
.....JOAN WHITE
Promotional Consultant.....QUINN DONOGHUE
Promotional Assistant.....PATRICIA O'REILLY
Stills.....KEITH HAMSHERE
Zoptic Operator.....DAVID SPEED
Flying Effects.....BOB HARMAN
Stunt Co-Ordinators.....PAUL WESTON
.....VIC ARMSTRONG
.....ALF JOING
Optical Printers.....DICK DIMBLEBY
.....DAVID DOCWRA
Matte Artist and Illustrafor.....IVOR BEDDOES
Matte Artist.....DOUG FERRIS
Matte Camera Operators.....PETER HARMAN
.....PETER HAMMOND

Wesscam Photography by.....RONALD GOODMAN
New York Process Stills.....CERVIN ROBINSON
New York Co-Ordinator.....CHRISTOPHER COLES
Main Title by.....CAMERA EFFECTS
Music Mixed and Recorded at the
Music Centre by.....JOHN RICHARDS
Sound Re-Recorded at
Twickenham Film Studios by.....GERRY HUMPHREYS
Aerial Camera Sequences.....WESSCAM
Special Lighting Effects by the.....LIGHTFLEX SYSTEM
Camera Equipment
Supplied by.....SAMUELSON FILM SERVICE LTD.
Lighting Equipment by...LEE ELECTRIC (LIGHTING) LTD.
Costumes by.....BERMAN AND NATHANS LTD.
Furs by.....FRANK COONEY

Filmed in PANAVISION (R) Processed by TECHNICOLOR(R)

Recorded n DOLBY STEREO (DD))

An International Film Production Inc. Picture

An Alexander Salkind Presentation

An ALEXANDER and ILYA SALKIND PRODUCTION

Distributed by WARNER BROS.

A WARNER COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

Running Time: 127 Min.

INTRODUCTION

Superman — The Movie allowed audiences to believe that a man could fly, and proved that the Man of Steel could still be an identifiable hero to audiences of the 1970's and 80's. The biggest question on everyone's mind, however, was could they possibly do it again?

Superman II put any such fears to rest. The film was as much fun as the original, and gave us extremely realistic characters we could identify with. The love affair between Superman and Lois Lane was a tangible thing, and a relationship that managed to touch the heart of the audience in a way that such fantasies have ever been able to do.

What follows is a review of **Superman II** and comments made by the cast and crew at the time of the film's release. Through the ensuing pages we'll see what appealed to each of them about the movie, and their roles in what has become one of America's greatest legends.

Superman II is that rarity among sequels, one that manages to equal its predecessor in virtually every way and, in some instances, surpass it.

Superman—The Movie was saddled with the responsibility of retelling the Man of Steel's origin, and, as such, is actually three movies in one. There's the Krypton segment, the Smallville sequences and, of course, Superman's arrival in Metropolis. The sequel, on the other hand, recaps the events of the first film over its opening titles, and swiftly moves on to establish its own identity.

After some preliminary scenes at the Daily Planet, the action moves to Paris, where a group of terrorists are threatening to blow up the Eiffel tower with a hydrogen bomb if their demands aren't met. Naturally, Lois Lane is in the midst of things, hanging on to the support beams beneath the Tower's elevator. And, just as naturally, it would seem as though she's covered her last story when the elevator's cables are blown by the Paris police, and it begins plummeting to the ground with Lois beneath it and the now armed hydrogen bomb within.

At the last moment, Superman stops the elevator in mid-plummet, and, smiling his most charming smile, notes, "I believe this is your floor, Miss Lane." A grateful Lois moves to safety and screams out that the bomb is within the elevator. Superman nods calmly and takes flight, carrying the elevator into the atmosphere and quickly enters outer space. He pushes it into the distance where the hydrogen bomb explodes harmlessly.

He flies back to earth, while, unknown to him, the shock wave from the explosion ruptures the dimensional plane of the Phantom Zone, thus freeing the three Kryptonian villains Zod, Ursa and Non.

In a combination of comic book threats and Greek tragedy, this moment explores the domino theory of evil (which, incidentally, I believe has just been invented by yours truly), where one act of evil sets another one in motion. Superman stops the terrorists, but, in doing so, inadvertently sets off events that will alter the destiny of earth and his own personal life.

At the Daily Planet, there's some amusing interplay between Clark Kent and Lois, with him experessing a bit of jealousy over her feelings for Superman. This bit once again successfully explores the eternal Superman —Lois — Clark triangle which has been a part of the legend since its beginning.

Meanwhile, the villians, each with the same powers as Superman, land on the moon and destory a joint American/Russian space mission. They discuss (and how they do this in a vacuum is beyond me) their extraordinary powers, and decide to conquer the nearby planet "Houston.'

Things are getting worse on earth, however, when Lex Luthor escapes from prison via a combination of holographic images, the bumbling of Otis and the escape ladder of Ms. Teschmecher. As in the original film, these scenes are rather campy, but, thanks to actor Gene Hackman, Lex never loses his inherent threat of evil.

Lois and Clark are covering a honeymoon hotel scam in Niagra Falls, and her suspicions of his real identity grow stronger when Superman just happens to show up as a kid falls into the falls by accident.

Her attempts to trick Clark into revealing his identity, however, are thwarted in a particularly funny scene where she jumps into the falls to prove her point, but lands up having to save Clark who also falls into the water. Guess he's just too smart for her.

Lex and Ms. Teschmecher, following alpha waves (you're not expecting an explanation, are you?) wind up at Superman's Fortress of Solititude in the Arctic where they discover the Kryptonian crystals, and hear representatives of Kal-el's home world. Among the images is that of his mother, who explains the history of the Phantom Zone, and says that a nuclear explosion in space might crack it open.

This bit of dialogue, unfortunately, is a bit contrived, bludgeoning the viewer with a description of what's already been seen. And how could she possibly know that a nuclear explosion in space would free them? Talk about convenience...

The Kryptonian villains touch down somewhere in the south and immediately start kicking ass, thus establishing the beginning of their new order. The army moves in, but are powerless. Discovering that "Houston" is actually earth, Zod approaches the TV cameras that have arrived and, essentially proclaims himself leader of the planet.

While this is going on, a depressed Lois is witness to Clark's tripping and his hand accidentally going into the fireplace — but not being burned. Clark valiantly tries to deny the truth, but realizes that he's trapped.

In a perfect example of actor Christopher Reeve's skills, he transforms Clark into Superman by merely removing his glasses, standing up straight and speaking in his natural voice. A fine job.

Superman flies Lois to his Fortress of Solitude (Lex has obviosly departed already) and begins to fill her in on his past. The courtship is going at full force, and it's easy to discern that these two people are deeply in love. He activates the crystal containing the image of his mother, and confesses his feelings for Lois.

Lara explains that if he chooses to spend his life with a mortal, then he must become a mortal. A crystal (what else?) chamber rises up, and she explains that it harnesses the power of Krypton's red sun and will strip him of his powers — but it will do so forever! Without hesitation he steps into the chamber, it bathes him in the red sun radiation, and a mortal Superman, his costume vanishing, thus leaving him in his Clark Kent clothes, steps out. He and Lois embrace and go to a sector of the Fortress where they make love.

This love scene is handled quite beautifully by Christopher Reeve, Margot Kidder and director Richard Lester, giving Superman and Lois a chance to express their love for the first time. Of course, it's a shame that he's got to lose his powers for this to happen, because it means he's never going to have a normal life. The only problem with this sequence is Lara saying that there's no turning back; that he'll never regain his powers.

Come on, Lara, who are you kidding?

The villains (convenient word to sum up three characters) arrive at the White House and tear up the place, then force the president to kneel before Zod, which he does "for the safety of the world."

The president exclaims that there's one man who will never bow down to him. Zod wants to know where this "imbecile" is.

Sometime later, Lois and Clark drive (where did they get a car in the arctic?) to a diner, where he gets involved in a fist fight with a low life punk. To put it mildly, Clark gets the tar beat out of him.

"Guess we're going to need a bodyguard," he tries to laugh.

"I don't want a bodyguard," Lois says. "I want the man I fell in love with."

"I only wish he were here, Lois."

This is a telling bit of dialogue, establishing quite a bit about the characters. Is Lois merely in love with Superman because of his powers? Could their love be based on something as superficial as that? It's a disquieting thought and one which, unfortunately, is not delved into.

After things have calmed down a bit in the diner, one of the owners turns on the television set and they see the president announcing that control of the world is being turned over to Zod. Clark is horrified, recognizing the threat facing the earth and saying that he's got to do something about it. Lois explains that it's too late; there's nothing he can do.

"I've got to try something," he says with anguish.

"It's not your fault. You didn't know this would happen."

"They knew," he replies, "but I didn't listen."

From there, Clark walks/hitchikes his way back to the Fortress. He arrives at the remains of the place and "talks" to his parents, humbly admitting that for the first time he failed. All seems lost, when he finds the green crystal that "called out to" him in **Superman — The Movie.**

A bored trio of villains sit in the White House, when Lex Luthor arrives and immediately ingratiates himself to them. They're about to kill him, when he states that he can bring them to Superman — the son of Jor-el. Zod's eyes light up, for revenge can finally be taken on the son of their jailer. In return, Luthor wants to be deemed Emperor of Australia.

A depressed Lois sits in the Daily Planet with Jimmy Olsen and Perry White, when the villains arrive and (once again) tear up the place. Lex calmly walks in, explaining to

Zod that Lois gets "every exclusive" from Superman. Because the son of Jor-el is not there, they move in for the kill. Suddenly, much to Luthor's relief, Superman is outside the window, asking the general if he would care to step outside. The villains take off, leaving a delighted Luthor behind.

How did he get his powers back? Screenwriter David Newman deems this a "magical" aspect of the story. What follows is an incredibly realistic battle between the four of them, with buildings being smashed, vehicles thrown and Non knocked right through a skyscraper. There's much more to the fight, but suffice it to say that it is a visually exciting sequence, proving how far special effects have come since the days that George Reeves was suspended over a glass table to give the impression of flight.

During the flight, Superman is knocked out, and he awakens to find Metropolis pretty much in ruins. He slowly wavers into the sky and flies off, leaving the public to turn against him for "chickening out."

The villains return to the Daily Planet, stating that the next time they will kill him. Once again they're about to eliminate Lex, when he states that he's the only man with Superman's home address. Grabbing him and Lois, they take flight for the Fortress of Solitude.

They arrive and are greeted by the Man of Steel. Another fight ensues, but Superman gains the advantage over Zod. Unfortunately he loses it when Ursa and Non threaten to quite literally tear Lois apart. Once again they threaten to kill Luthor (this is getting tedious). Superman whispers that if they can get the villians into the molecule chamber, it will turn them into mortals. Naturally Luthor informs them of this. This finally earns their respect, and the "Emperor of Australia" is told to activate the device. Superman, with no choice, steps in and the chamber closes. The Fortress glows red, and moments later a seemingly weakened Superman steps out.

Zod orders him to kneel before him and take his hand. He does so, but crushes it. The three villains are quickly disposed of as Luthor comes to the conclusion that Superman "Switched it" so that the Fortress was bathed in the red sun radiation, while he was safe in the chamber.

Luthor is turned over to the authorities.

The next morning. Clark meets a devastated Lois in her office. She's an emotional wreck, knowing that their relationship had to come to an end before it really got started. Clark leans over and kisses her firmly on the lips. She suddenly gets dizzy, and, snapping out of it a moment later, finds that she's completely forgotten the past few days.

This sequence is nicely handled, but there's no explanation as to why Lois forgets everything. It just seems a bit too convenient.

Later, Clark returns to the diner and gets involved in another fight with the bully that beat him up earlier. Naturally he is victorious this time, although how much more than an emotional victory can this be for him? Still, it gets the audience cheering. Superman streaks through the air carrying the American flag. He arrives at the White House, apologizes to the president for being away so long, and promises that it won't happen again. With that he takes off and reaches outer space, where he locks into earth orbit and begins patrolling his home.

* * * * * * *

Overall, **Superman II** is both exciting and touching. The characters, with the exception of the villains, are never comic book level, and the cast is completely believable.

Christopher Reeve, in particular, is just so damn good at sustaining the "reality" of Superman that you may occasionally be prone to think you're watching a documentary of a real hero in action. In other words, he brings more realism to the role than you would think possible.

Like the James Bond or Indiana Jones films, **Superman II** merely whets the appetite for another adventure. Unfortunately, as we'll discuss next issue, **Superman III** didn't live up to its predecessors.

CHRISTOPHER REEVE

ON PLAYING SUPERMAN & CLARK KENT

Superman—The Movie brought the Man of Steel back to life for modern day movie audiences, and paved the way for a brand new series which would compete with the likes of James Bond and Indiana Jones. In addition, it made a tremendous star out of relative newcomer Christopher Reeve.

After the success of the first Superman film, Reeve found himself in the position of having dozens of scripts to choose from. He eventually accepted the romantic time travel story **Somewhere in Time**, choosing to reject others which were just too far removed from the Superman image he had established.

"While I don't intend to make a lifelong career out of Superman," he explained, "I figure I owe it to the producers — and in a sense to the audience — not to do a complete role reversal."

Hundreds of actors (would be and professional) had tried out for the role as did muscle builders and weight lifters, but there was something about Reeve that got him the part. There was no denying that his physique had potential, and there was a certain sense of "all American" about him. Additionally, he had achieved a wealth of acting experience and talent that could bring a comic book hero to life.

Despite what people told him, Reeve did not believe that he looked the part.

"I sort of looked like Jimmy Stewart standing sideways," he joked. "Most of my exercise up to that time had been mental."

This changed rather quickly as Reeve began a training program under the instructions of David (Darth Vader) Prowse. Mornings were devoted to roadwork, followed by two hours of lifting weights and another ninety minutes on the trampoline. A high protein diet also played an important part in creating the new physical image he was after.

As his biceps grew, so did Reeve's approach to the dual role of Superman and Clark Kent.

"Both identities are more sharply defined in **Superman II**," he related. "In the first picture, we had to establish who Superman was and why he disguised himself as Clark Kent. This time, we come out swinging.

"Like most people of my age, I was brought up on Superman. I knew the classic stance — hands on hips, cape blowing in the breeze, bullets bouncing off his chest. That's the way the 6½ billion people have loved Superman, and I wouldn't dream of changing it. But I wanted to find other dimensions as well.

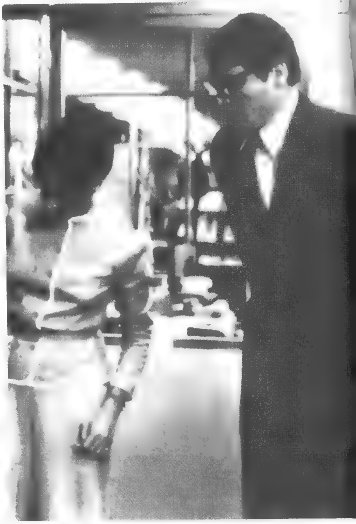
"In a sense," he elaborated, "Superman is a stranger in a strange land, a solitary man with incredible powers, trying to fit into his adopted planet. He has warmth and a great sense of humor. And while he has sworn to uphold 'truth, justice and the American way,' there's nothing self-conscious about him. That's simply because it's what he believes in, in a world filled with arch-criminals and evil geniuses. However, Clark Kent is more fun to play. there's more scope to the role because he is such an awful mess."

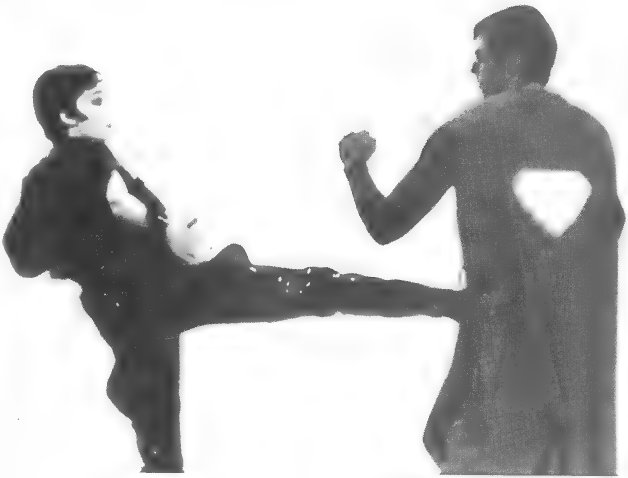
The actor's reverence for the Superman character emerges in other subtler ways. Whenever filming ceased on the **Superman II** set, he would automatically reach for a robe before talking to visitors.

"Superman would not sit around in a folding chair, letting his costume get wrinkled or stained," he said with a smile. "Clark, on the other hand, couldn't care less. His suits aren't that well-tailored — or pressed — to begin with."

By the same token, he remains casual and approachable in an age when public figures generally plead for privacy, backed by a flying wedge of intermediaries.

"I'm doing what I enjoy most, acting," Reeve concluded. "Why should I get so uptight about it?"





SARAH DOUGLAS ON URSA

"Ursa is consumed with a total hatred of the male sex, with the sole exception of General Zod, whom she adores," detailed Sarah Douglas.

"Ursa dresses entirely in black organza with daring little slits that make you think you see more than you really do. Kids will know immediately that she is evil. Their dads...hopefully...will think she's sexy.

"I found myself thinking nasty thoughts (for the role). That's nothing new. It's an actor's trick. But it worked. I walked around saying to myself, 'I hate men. Give me death and destruction.'

"I match Zod and Non evil for evil. In fact, I'm the one with some of the most wicked schemes for subjugating the human race. I love the sequence where we invade the White House and I'm throwing secret service men and FBI agents all over the place."

GENE HACKMAN ON PLAYING LEX LUTHOR

One of the most winning qualities of the first two Superman films (and undoubtedly the forthcoming number four) was actor Gene Hackman's interpretation of the Lex Luthor character. As portrayed by the thespian, you honestly believed that this dude could cause some serious harm to the Man of Steel.

"Luthor was awful enough when he was in control," Hackman gleefully pointed out. "But now that he has become an oily, unctuous underling for a gang of interplanetary hoods, he's even worse. Lex's slavish servility to Zod is a lot like the way Renfield used to fawn on Dracula.

"When I did **Superman**," he concluded, "it was a departure from anything I'd every played before. Lex is so devious, he sometimes double crosses himself...just for practice. It's really a departure from anything I've every done. I'm not sure I'd have cast myself in the part, but I'm damned glad somebody did."

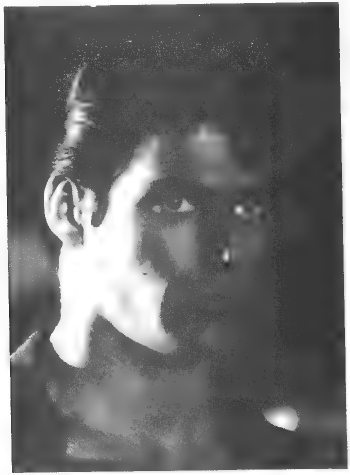
TERENCE STAMP ON ZOD

"We really are evil," he declared honestly. "To make matters worse, we possess the same phenomenal powers Superman does. In fact, we consider him a moral weakling. He feels emotions. He cares about people. How absurd!

"Today's heavies are too often psychoanalyzed to death. You're expected to find some small touch of humanity in a character, some rational explanation for the awful things he does. That is not the case with Zod. He is brutal...vicious...evil...and corrupt...without any redeeming qualities. Ask him the right time and he will probably reply by killing you. It is a joy to play a two dimensional character for a change.

"Most criminals are in it for the money. The really dangerous ones graduate to power. They either become underworld bosses or world leaders. Zod doesn't even have pockets in his black Kryptonian uniform. He's strictly a power junkie.

"There was a time where I, personally, wanted fame, power, money, all those things. Now, my compulsion is finding the sort of role that makes me challenge myself."



MARGOT KIDDER ON LOIS LANE

"There's a lot of Lois in me," Margot Kidder revealed. "Lois is hyperactive. So am I. Lois is a newspaper reporter. That was my first ambition. In fact, I worked at it for a while and found that I was just as sneaky as Lois, trying to get people to reveal their darkest secrets."

VALERIE PERRINE ON EVE TESCHMACHER

"(Eve) is not really a bad person," Perrine defended her character. "She is simply turned on by weirdness. And since Lex is as weird as they come, she's madly in love with him."

SUSANNAH YORK ON LARA

"It's not a very large role this time," Susannah York said of her character, "but it's pivotal to the plot. When Superman confronts not only three super villains from his own planet, but the most difficult decision of his life on earth, his mother's spirit returns to him. She has a deep and startling secret to share."

NED BEATTY ON OTIS

Actor Ned Beatty has one line which seems to summarize his opinion of Otis. "If Otis studies very hard, he may someday become a moron."

ILYA SALKIND: EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

"**Superman** has become one of the most successful films in the history of movies," Salkind announced proudly. "Its success is largely because of the spirit of the legend. Everybody wants to fly, everybody wants to feel free and totally on top of the world. In that sense, there's something of Superman in all of us.

"Despite the creative continuity that links **Superman** and **Superman II**, there are distinct differences between the films. **Superman** set up who our hero was and how he came here. Then it pitted his super powers against things and events —rockets, earthquakes, tidal waves.

"This time, his enemies are **people**. They have the same phenomenal gifts he does, but choose to use them for evil."

DIRECTOR RICHARD LESTER

"For **Superman II** I compiled two enormous reference books. One was a glossary containing indexed cross-references to all the characters in the Superman saga and all the names. Krypton...what does it mean? Super-dog...when did he first appear? And how do you take him for a walk? And so on. You get hooked on the kind of craziness.

"The other book was summaries of all the stories over 35-odd years of Superman.

"Both books were useful. They helped the screenwriters and myself produce new areas of action. DC Comics has control over the rights, so we had to stick to certain bounds as far as Superman's powers were concerned. But we could give him new adventures...And also, of course, any touches of humor or imagination that came to us."

STOP THE PRESSES!!!!

NEW WORLD PICTURES BUYS MARVEL COMICS!

LOS ANGELES—The hot news today is that New World Pictures, Ltd. today announced that it has entered in to an agreement to acquire the Marvel Entertainment Group from Cadence Industries Corporation.

The Marvel Entertainment Group includes the New York-based Marvel Comics Group, the world's largest publisher of comic books, Marvel Comics Ltd., their UK publishing and licensing subsidiary, and Marvel Productions, their California-based animation development and production operation.

Marvel Comics publishes 40 to 50 different comic books each month in the United States, including such popular headliners as the adventures of Spider-Man, the X-Men and the Fantastic Four. Marvel Comics sales account for almost 65% of all comics sold in America. Estimates place total readership at nearly 16 million readers per month. There are literally hundreds of characters inhabiting the Marvel Universe and New Universe.

In addition, Marvel publishes Star comics and Epic Comics. Rights to all Marvel-owned characters will become the property of New World. Of course, those characters, particularly in the Epic and Star lines, that Marvel publishes but does not own will not become the property of New World.

Marvel also publishes a wide variety of children's books under the Marvel Books imprint. These books include: coloring, pop-up, puzzle work books and other "activity" books designed for younger children. In addition, Marvel publishes a line of pre-school books under a license from Fisher-Price. The Fisher-Price Books are distributed to Toys 'R' Us, Waldenbooks and Dalton Book Stores. Marvel Comics Group also licenses the various Marvel characters for use in toys, games, posters, clothing and other applications throughout the United States and Canada.

Marvel Comics Ltd. is the United Kingdom branch of Marvel which publishes five different comics weekly plus annuals and other special format materials marketed to the younger clientele which purchases the bulk of British comics.

The division is responsible for licensing the use of various Marvel characters throughout the UK and Western Europe. In addition, Marvel Comics are published, under license to other publishers, in 16 different languages and distributed in over 26 countries throughout the world.

Marvel Productions is currently producing five animated series for network and first run syndicated television for the current television season. The 250 one-half hour animated episodes currently in production make Marvel Productions the third largest producer of animated programming in the United States. Among the animated shows now in production are **Muppet Babies** for CBS, **G.I. Joe, Transformers** and **Defenders of the Earth** and **Pony and Friends** for first run syndication. Previously produced animated series from Marvel include **Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk, Dungeons and Dragons, Defenders of the Universe** and **Fantastic Four**, all of which are now in syndication. Marvel has also produced two full-length animated features, **My Little Pony** and **The Transformers**.

Lawrence L. Kuppin, Co-Chairman of New World, adds, "The business segments occupied by Marvel fit perfectly with New World's existing businesses. With the acquisition of Marvel, New World makes an entry in a substantial way into the publishing, animation merchandising and licensing arenas. Marvel's vast array of characters, its name recognition and enormous success in the comic and animation business will add impressive growing assets to New World's operations."

Harry Evans Sloan, Co-Chairman of New World, states, "Marvel's comics division dominates the US comic business and will provide Marvel Productions, New World Pictures, New World Television and New World Video with a steady stream of ideas and characters for animation, theatrical features, live action television production and made-for videos."

Sloan continues, "We are buying priceless resources to continue to entertain and capture the imagination of young people throughout the world."

James Galton, President and Chief Executive Officer of Marvel, states, "All of us at Marvel are excited at the opportunity to become an integral part of New World's rapidly expanding operations. The close tie-ins between publishing, licensing and the film and television media have become ever more important in recent years. We believe that the synergy between New World's theatrical, television and video operations and Marvel's publishing, licensing and animation business creates a multitude of new avenues to exploit and promote Marvel's wealth of characters."

New World Pictures, Ltd. went public in October 1985.

Obviously the floodgates are open. The combination of the talents of the two companies makes a constant stream of new movie, television, video and animation product a foregone conclusion. Fans of the antics of superheros on screen will be thrilled. Let's just hope they do it right!

SPIDERMAN

INTERVIEW

IN INTERVIEW WITH SPIDER-MAN SCREENWRITER

TED NEWSOM

Despite the fact that **Spider-Man — The Movie** has been put on hold, at least until mid 1987, we though it would nonetheless be of interest to readers of this magazine to continue our coverage of the film in the making. To this end, we're pleased to present an exclusive interview with Ted Newsom, half the writing team of Spidey's first cinematic adventure.

Newsom began his career as a journalist, writing articles on film for such magazines as **Cinefantastique**, **LA Calender** and **National Lampoon**. In addition, he spent several years as editor of **Hustler** magazine, which he deems as "fun, and it also taught me how to make a magazine."

Having always been interested in film, Newsom decided to take what he had learned via interviews with filmmakers and performers, and channel it into a career as a screenwriter. Besides **Spiderman**, he is working on a variety of projects, which will be explored in their entirety in a future issue.

Ted Newsom

Q: I know this is a cliche, but how did you get involved in the writing of **Spider-Man — The Movie**?

A: My Partner, John Brancoto, and I had done a live action script for Marvel called **Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos**. Stan Lee thought it was pretty good, and he asked us if there were any other Marvel characters we would like to do, and we said, "Yeah, Spider-Man." He said, "Well, I don't know. There's another writer who's got it." We said, "Okay, fine." Well, that writer didn't work out. This writer, whose name I won't mention, is a little bit older, and he basically had a misreading of the character. Stan went into Cannon and said, "Hey, give these guys a try." They agreed, and that's it.

Q: To you, what's the challenge of trying to bring Spider-Man to the movie screen?

A: It's a dual challenge, because there are millions of us who are Spider-Man fans. But when you're doing a movie, you can't just go for that few million audience. It's got to be a movie that's accessible to the average person on the street. Not everybody knows what Spider-Man is doing these days, or what he is to begin with. All of those things had to be taken into account, but we also knew that we were doing a film that had to appeal to those who knew the comics. You couldn't drastically rearrange Peter Parker, and make him come from Detroit or something.

We kept quite a few elements, and certainly the characters, from the original comics. When I say original, I mean from the first appearances of Spider-Man.

Q: You mean from the Steve Ditko days.

A: On up to the early John Romita.

Q: Does this film detail the whole Uncle Ben story?

A: Oh, Uncle Ben. Say it three times real fast, and you can't help but think of converted rice (both laugh). It is the origin of Spider-Man, and changing it would be like changing the Superman origin story. In the film they played with it a bit, and added little variations along the way. It was, basically, what was written in 1938. What we're doing, although it is a contemporary version of it, is basically based on our material on what was written in 1961 or 1962.

Q: I think it will be easier because the alter identity is, in fact, who we're talking about. It's Peter, and **he** puts on a costume. It will be easier for a comic book audience, number one, but a general audience, number two, to be able to look at whoever is going to play Peter Parker and identify with the guy. Our Peter Parker, like any good Peter Parker, is so screwed up. He's got problems all over the place, he can't keep a girl friend or get one in the first place. He don't get no respect. He tries to make ends meet, gets all kinds of nonsense from Jameson. He's a fun character, and I think that's what drew me to him when I was a kid. I

think we tried to keep some of that. I don't want this to sound too gushy, but we did try to keep the integrity of that. As to whether or not anybody can identify with a character in the mask, good question. And it's something we won't know until the picture comes out, because there may be the response of people saying, "Oh, it's just a stunt man in a Spider-Man suit." It's an interesting problem.

Q: I think the Superman films kind of sweep you up in the magic, and you forget that it's Christopher Reeve hanging on a wire. It's like you're actually watching Superman, and I'm just curious if Spider-Man will have that same effect on the audience.

A: It's hard to say. The only thing I can say that all of us are going to do, is that we'll try to remain true to the essence of the character. Spider-Man is a tremendous, lovable super hero who has all sorts of problems, and can't keep his mouth shut. We're all very excited about it, and I hope that the essence of the character still comes through.

Q: Is the approach serious or campy?

A: If by campy you mean like Adam West as Batman, no. It's an adventure-comedy. We don't send up our characters; they're real human beings. It's not something that's played for broad humor.

Q: What can you tell me storywise about the picture, besides the fact that it deals with the origin.

A: It is the origin story, and there will be a couple of twists on that. The creation of Spider-Man is tied up with the creation of Doctor Octopus. It's either that or have two outlandish scientific accidents happen within a very short span of time, or Doctor Octopus just happens to show up and people say, "Oh yea, he's that guy who had the accident a few years back, with the gigantic arms." No. In this story, they are tied up, and their lives are intertwined. It's just easier from a plot aspect to do that, and it works. I don't know how, exactly, it will be accepted by devotees who are going to say, "Oh no, that's not really the way it was." That's fine, but remember we only have an hour and a half or two hours to tell the whole story, and you could spend two hours doing the first story, and Spider-Man wouldn't come on until the last ten minutes.

Q: It's a terrific idea.

A: And it should work. We do sort of set up some sense of reality; of a real world. That, I don't think ever came through in Superman, because Metropolis wasn't a real place. The alleys were clean in Metropolis. Nobody was dirty or grubby. Spider-Man is now, and always has been, set in New York. And New York can be a really neat place, just like it can be a really grubby place. We use both of those things.

Q: Is Spidey a smart ass like he is in the comics?

A: Oh yes. He has to be. That's one aspect that has to be kept for a couple of reasons. We used the short lived live action series as a guide to what not to do. The major problem there was that Peter Parker was a wuss, and he carried a purse. Well, it was a camera bag, but it looked like a purse (laughs). I never bought the fact that Spider-Man was played by Nicholas Hammond, who played Peter Parker, because he never talked. In the eight episodes or so that they shot, Spider-Man has about eight lines. That's nuts! Spider-Man never shuts up. Even when it would be best to shut up. Don't say anything, just let it go....no, uh-uh, Spider-Man's got to say something smart and somebody will punch him. That's one way to get around your earlier question, which was how can an audience identify with a guy running around in a mask. If we establish the character as being a smart ass, and Peter Parker has some of that in him, then I think the lines Spider-Man will have will, with any luck, carry over, and you'll say, "Yeah, it's the same guy. He never shuts up."

Q: Do you feel a certain responsibilty in bringing this hero to the screen?

A: Yeah, very much. Both John and I have been fans for years and years. I remember reading other drafts of this thing by different writers and watching the TV show, and thinking how disappointed I was because it wasn't Spider-Man. I looked at this as my chance to use whatever I know about the character, and whatever I know about writing pictures, and put it together. I think it worked. Everyone involved loves the character, and sees a lot of possibilities for a really good adventure.

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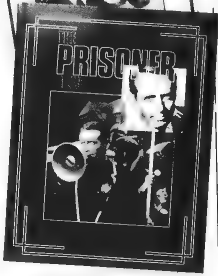

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A LAST WORD: PART II

In this space last issue, there was a sense of optimism as we discussed a variety of comic book inspired films destined to be reaching the screen in the forseeable future.

First up was **Howard the Duck**, the multi million dollar fantasy epic from **Star Wars** creator George Lucas.

The duck laid an egg.

Captain America, which was to be directed by Michael Winner, has been put back on the shelf indefinitely, with no news as to when or if it will ever begin production.

Spider-Man — The Movie, which was originally to have been Cannon's major Christmas 1986 release, has also been posponed, with the difference being that production has been tentatively rescheduled to being in early 1987.

Rumors are abounding on this one, with the most popular being that Cannon is in serious financial trouble and, quite frankly, can't afford to spend the over $20 million required to make the film properly.

Director Joe Zito, who has been set to helm Spidey's first cinematic adventure, explains that this is not the case. The studio, he says, has chosen the tentatively titled **Missing in Action Part III** as their major release for 1987.

"The film will be ready to go in a month," he says, "and Cannon would really like me to do it because they're expecting it to be Chuck Norris' biggest movie ever, and we've worked so well together in the past. I agreed to do the film because it will be completed by February, and then I'll move back on to **Spider-Man** which **will** become a reality."

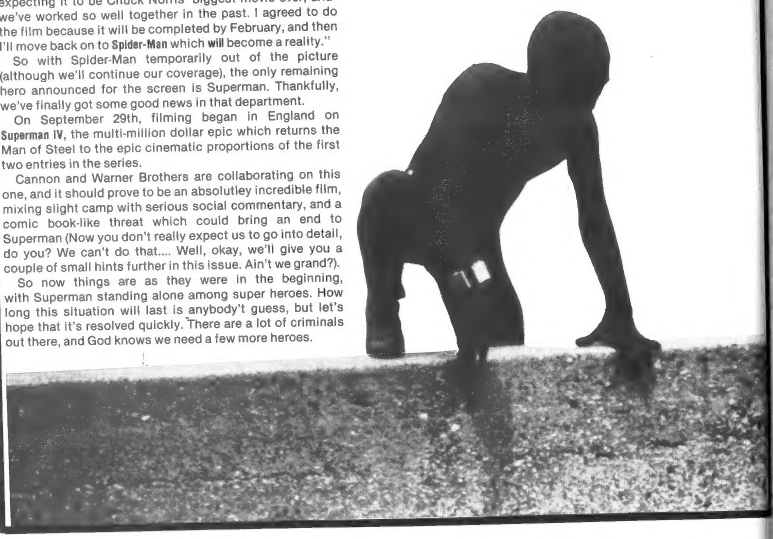
So with Spider-Man temporarily out of the picture (although we'll continue our coverage), the only remaining hero announced for the screen is Superman. Thankfully, we've finally got some good news in that department.

On September 29th, filming began in England on **Superman IV**, the multi-million dollar epic which returns the Man of Steel to the epic cinematic proportions of the first two entries in the series.

Cannon and Warner Brothers are collaborating on this one, and it should prove to be an absolutley incredible film, mixing slight camp with serious social commentary, and a comic book-like threat which could bring an end to Superman (Now you don't really expect us to go into detail, do you? We can't do that.... Well, okay, we'll give you a couple of small hints further in this issue. Ain't we grand?).

So now things are as they were in the beginning, with Superman standing alone among super heroes. How long this situation will last is anybody't guess, but let's hope that it's resolved quickly. There are a lot of criminals out there, and God knows we need a few more heroes.

SEE PAGE 44 FOR LATEST INFORMATION!



Superman and Spider-Man are two American folk heroes, cut from the same cloth as the more traditional Robin Hood or William Tell. In fact, when a poll was conducted of the American people, Superman was better known than most of the folk heroes of the Old World and certainly better than our own of an earlier day such as Pecos Bill or Old Stormalong! Though they were originally created for the four color comic book page, both have been reincarnated in virtually every modern medium: comic strips, television and movies.

This book continues the tale of the Web Spinner and the Man of Steel as they made their ventures onto film, both for the small screen and the large.

This volume is jam-packed with exciting new information! Not only do the writers and virtually every important cast member talk about what lies ahead for Superman IV, but there's exciting new from Marvel as well. Ted Newsom offers his views of the Spider-Man movie that he wrote for Cannon, but that's now a thing of the past. New World Pictures has just bought Marvel Comics and they are about to release a string of comic book related film and television the likes of which has never been seen before! Don't miss out on learning the early details.

And we don't ignore the past either. There is a very exciting section on Superman II including, once again, comments from the actors involved as well as a detailed story synopsis and analysis.

For the fan of the comic book or film medium, this book is an invaluable reference and a rousing good read. Even the casual reader will find a cornucopia of wonders both old and new!

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